

Extract from Youtube Videos : How Books Are Handmade At The Last Printing Press Of Its Kind In The US Still Standing

How Books Are Handmade At The Last Printing Press Of Its Kind In The US | Still Standing

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Arion Press is the last printing press in the US where books are handmade from start to finish. Using machines and techniques that date back to the 1800s, these books can take years to make and cost up to \$10,000 to buy. Set against the tech hub backdrop of San Francisco, this institution helps keep the traditional craft of letterpress printing alive.

Extract : this is the last printing press in the u.s where books are handmade from start to finish every letter of an ariane press book is created one by one together they make up a book that can take years to produce and cost up to ten thousand dollars to buy that's because this san francisco institution uses machines and techniques that date back to the 1800s printing presses like arion used to be common but with the advent of faster and cheaper printing this traditional method is fading away so now we're having to like learn as much as we can before it goes away it is a huge responsibility and i think it kind of weighs on all of us but at arion press the team devotes their days to preserving this historic trade even in one of the tech capitals of the world we visited this 101 year old press to learn how and why it's still standing each book begins in the foundry where brian ferrett spends his day at a monotype machine from the 1890s making individual letters it can be very very difficult there could be days where nothing goes right there could be weeks where nothing goes right when i have three casters running and nothing's going wrong that that makes me just ridiculously happy he lights a fire under the machine melting the lead tin and antimony solution that is used to create the letters we have a pump here and a nozzle and the pump draws up the lead and then we'll shoot the lead out the nozzle from there the lead goes into a mold then a mat case with the chosen lettering pushes down on it he sends the finish type down the hall to the print room by the end of the day particularly when we're printing we're covered with ink and it's it's just fantastic it's kind of like a little kid again getting messy and getting dirty at this stage of the process the foundry has sent us galleys of type they usually come out about two pages per galley when we get those galleys we take a proof print of that jeff raymond arranges the type into a page layout letter by letter so on this one this is page 53 to keep the page together jeff wraps it in string then he brings it to the proofing press to check for any mistakes once the proof looks good it goes for the final print run on one of the larger presses the final stage of the bookmaking process is in the bindery this is where everything gets made into the book from scratch megan gibbous folds sews and glues each piece of the book together by hand the final product is a work of art i think there's nothing that can compare to physically holding a book in your hands feeling the piece of paper running your finger over it and feeling how the type isn't pressed into the page however modern technology has made this kind of letterpress printing nearly obsolete today top us printers use offset printing presses that can produce 120 000 pages per hour before working at arion brian

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spent three years at one of these commercial factories i had been working printing big runs of magazines 24 hour a day type of place 12 hour shifts there were so many people i couldn't even count how many people were there letterpress printing just can't compete with that kind of efficiency i mean there's a reason why this line of work isn't fiscally viable really anymore because it is very time intensive that all adds up while many other traditional presses have closed arion has stayed in business thanks to a group of loyal subscribers like book collectors institutions and libraries this broadside sheet of the preamble to the constitution is one of the most recent projects to come through the print room making only 350 copies this limited edition print sells for 50 arion also sells cases of type to order gives public tours and holds workshops at 45 brian is one of a dwindling number of people who make a living as a typesetter and with fewer people practicing this historic craft staff feel a personal responsibility to keep the knowledge alive when it comes to the casting part there are very few people who can do it there are so few machines around anymore and even when you do find them the knowledge that's out there is disappearing to pass on the knowledge to the next generation brian takes every chance he can get to share his skills he mentors apprentices during the four-year program at arion the first few weeks i was here i just felt i'm surrounded by these people who are making this stuff and they knew exactly what they're doing it's like oh my god you know it's almost impossible to find a place where you can learn these skills brian also shares the craft with his six-year-old daughter in his garage at home [Music] [Music] can i do that papa sure okay yeah i normally do little dots happy valentine's day to you it does feel different than newer books you know a mass-produced book there's a different touch to it that handmade touch is striking a cord even in the tech hub of san francisco you have all these tech people and they've been sitting at their computer all day doing non-tactile things and they come here and they're always crazily impressed this gives arion hope that their business and this craft will continue to live on in an increasingly digital world you can get a book from 500 years ago and you can still open it and you can still enjoy that book i have files on my computer from 20 years ago that are gone because i have no idea how to open that anymore so i think it does really last a whole lot longer than the things that we have now the era that it was made in adds to its character and its beauty [Music]